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23 June 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Repercussions in the UN of OXCART deployment to Okinawa or use over South China

REFERENCES: (a) SNIE 10-2-66: REACTIONS TO A POSSIBLE US COURSE OF ACTION (17 March 1966)

(b) Memorandum for the Director: "Reactions to Reconnaissance by OXCART vehicles over North Vietnam and China" (17 June 1966)

1. Reference (a) concluded that successful OXCART operations over mainland China would probably not be publicized by the Chinese Communists, but that they would try to destroy the aircraft, and that if it came down on Chinese territory (especially with a live American pilot) they would launch a major propaganda campaign. The SNIE also pointed out that mere deployment of the aircraft to Okinawa would soon become known and might be publicized by the Japanese or US press.

2. Reference (b) emphasized that the timing of an OXCART reconnaissance program would have a bearing on the degree of reaction of the Chinese, and of the world at large.

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3. One of the times when it would be relatively disadvantageous to have the OXCART program come to light would be the early days of the forthcoming UN General Assembly session. The Assembly will meet on 20 September, and one of its first items of business will be the annual consideration of Chinese membership. As always, maintenance of the US position on this matter will be a difficult and complicated business, and it could be made more difficult by any appreciable international agitation which might arise over OXCART deployment or use. It is possible that, in the context of the UN meeting, Communist or neutralist powers might choose to make more of an issue over OXCART deployment to Okinawa, or over publicized OXCART overflights of China, than we have estimated they would. They might hope thereby to influence the Assembly's actions on Chinese membership.

4. As a general proposition, we continue to believe that the amount of international feeling which would be aroused by propaganda concerning deployment would not be great. As noted above, loss of an OXCART vehicle over China, especially if the pilot were captured alive, would be the occasion for a major political and propaganda campaign, which might embarrass the US

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in upholding its position and affect UN deliberations on Chinese membership. But even in this case, we are unable to judge whether any votes in the General Assembly on the membership issue would be affected.

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FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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FROM SHERMAN KENT

TO: The Director Mr Helms

The attached relates to
the OX & the subject of
to-morrow's 303 meeting.

We thought you might
find it useful.

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